

14 September 66

TO: Bill Jordan

FROM: Rufus Phillips

SUBJ: Vietnam - Lansdale Team - Election Follow-up.

1. Pursuant to our conversation, I would like to suggest the following as fields for continuing action by the Lansdale Team:

- a. Local Elections. This is a logical follow-up to the current election and comes under General Thang's authority as Super Minister. I'm enclosing a copy of a Newsweek article on local elections which you may not have seen which summarizes the need. My personal opinion is that local elections are absolute essential to the success of the Revolutionary Development Program. I would suggest, and I believe Ed tentatively agrees, that the local election question might best be part of the new constitution which would establish grassroots as well as national institutions.
- b. Political Liaison work with the GVN and The New Constituent Assembly helping them work in harmony to produce an effective constitution. The Embassy political section has currently grabbed off the responsibility for advising the GVN on the Constitution, but they are ill suited for it. Also, this assumes that the GVN will impose what it wants on the Assembly which is the wrong approach. As Ed's memo "Lessons Learned from 1956 on the Constitution" (or a similar title) points out, the U. S. advisory role must be indirect. Suggest you keep an eye out for this memo.

2. As a follow-up to the elections, I would suggest that the U. S. urge Ky to undertake actions which would reconcile dissidents such as the Buddhists and the Catholics. This seems to be a time (between the elections and the opening of the Assembly) when the GVN could make gestures leading from strength. Specifically, I would recommend that we urge that:

Memorandum

Vietnam - Lansdale Team - Election Follow-up

Page 2.

- a. The prisoner release, already approved in principle by the Leadership Committee prior to the elections, be implemented.
- b. Ky pay a personal call on Tri Quang to inquire about his health. (Ky was convinced by Colonel Loan and others to do this prior to the elections but did not because of the coup scare).

3. I enclose with this memo, a listing of Ed's memos sent to Bill Bundy through 7 September. I've checked those which I feel might be of special interest including the one on The Asian Labor Party which I believe Rostow should see if he hasn't already. Also enclosed is the SLO "Vietnamese Slang - Dictionary" which you may not have seen. This was put out by Ed on 8 September, and throws interesting side-lights on Vietnamese thinking. Also demonstrates how far ahead of the rest of the Americans, Ed and his team are in understanding the Vietnamese. I suggest as wide a circulation as possible of this back here.